

A ✓ N^o 15
SERMON

Preach'd in the
Parish Church of St. *Warbrough*, *Dublin*:

May, the 7th. 1721.

At the *Annual Meeting* of the CHILDREN

Educated in

The Charity - Schools

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By Henry Lord Bishop of *Elphin*.

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The Church - Schools



By Henry I. and Bishop of Exeter

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ECCLESIASTES, the XIth, Verse 1X.

Childhood and Youth are Vanity.

AN fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not saith Job, 14. 2. As a Shadow continueth not in one stay, but is always in motion, from the rising of the Sun, to the going down thereof; so also is Man from the beginning, to the end of his Days, from the Morning, to the Evening of his Life; the first step he takes into the World, is but the beginning of his Journey out of it, he is never fixed, but still mov-

ing on, till his Light is darkened with the Shadow of Death. The four General Stages of his Life, are Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age, and few, very few there are that pass thro' all these; but as by the Interposition of a Morning Cloud, the Light is sometimes early intercepted, and the shadow flees away, so the Life of Man is often shut up in Obscurity, as soon as the Day begins to dawn upon him, and visits him with Light: Nay, every ones Life is subject to so many Imperfections, and withal so very uncertain, that at the very best, it is but as it were the shadow of Life, and in some Parts of it very little more than the Dream of a shadow.

In a Word, His Journey thro' this Vale of Misery at the longest is very short, the utmost Period of Life being but *as a Span long*, and in that short Span. good part of it is very useless, and insignificant to the true Purposes of Life; for, according to the Observation of the Wise Man in my Text, *Childhood and Youth are Vanity.* In Discourfing upon which Words, I shall consider,

First, The Vanity of Childhood.

Secondly, The Vanity of Youth.

Thirdly, Some proper Inferences that may be drawn from thence.

Lastly, I shall make an Application suitable to the Charitable Occasion of our present Meeting together, and so conclude.

First Then I am to consider the Vanity of *Childhood* : Not to mention those Days of Darkness, when the Imperfect Embryo is forming into Life, when the Life of the Child is scarce distinct from that of the Mother, in and by whom (thro' the Appointment of an All-wise Providence) it *lives, moves, and has its Being* ; whereby the violent Impressions of Fear, or Desire, or such like, which it receives from that tender Parent before it comes into the World, are found to have lasting Effects afterwards, both upon its Body and Soul ; and as it sometimes brings with it outward Marks of what it felt thro' the Disturbances and Passions of Her that bare it, so the inward Impressions upon the Mind, are oft-times as evident and durable as they.

But let us consider the Infant just entring into the World with *strong Crying and Tears*, as if it was averse to Life, or was sensible of the future Miseries of it, and had some kind of fore-knowledge of its Portion in this Region of Sorrow. *Nascitur, & statim plorat futura Calamitatis Propheta*, saith St. Aug. Its first Crying is indeed heard with Joy, because it is a Token of Life, but withal it is a certain sign of Weakness, and a Natural, and a very moving Call for Help and Succour, which it can by no Means give its self, nor express its wants of, nor ask Relief from others, but by such *Lamentation and Woe*. Alas ! How vain a thing is Man in this Infant State, a State of great Impotency and extream Frailty, in which he suffers much, and can do but little, being without Power to act as a Man in any of his Faculties, either of Body or Mind : At this Age all the noble Powers of the Soul lie Dormant, for want of a Body proportionate to their Use, and how strong soever Reason may in its self be at that tender Season of Life, yet is it forc'd to sympathize with the weakness of the Organs, by which it acts : *When I was a Child*, saith the Apost. 1 Cor. 13. 11. *I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child* : But when I became a Man, I put away Childish Things ; plainly intimating, that so vain are all our Operations in that State, that neither our Thoughts, nor our Words, nor our Actions, are fit to be continued, when we come to riper Understanding, and the proper Use of them, is not to use them, but cast them off.

But if *Childhood* is thus altogether *Vanity*, even after we come to some Use of Speech, what is it in that weaker State, when a

Man may be compared to the Images of the Heathen, of whom the *Psalmist* by way of Derision thus speaketh; *Psalms 115. 7. Feet have they, and walk not; neither speak they thro' their Throat.*

Man of all the Creatures born into the World is the most helpless, and continues the longest so, of any that I know of in it: Let us consider the Beasts of the Field, how by a strange instinct of Nature they know their own Dam, and run immediately to Her for Nourishment who gave them Life; Nature (or rather the God of Nature) teacheth them of whom to seek their Food, and the Ways and Means of coming at it, as soon as they stand in Need of it; but Man in that early State wou'd starve a Thousand times, did not the Care of others bring him, and *feed him with Food convenient for him*, and were not his Parents or Nurses Hands and Feet and every thing to him, his longest stay in this World, would scarce be more than that of *a Guest in an Inn, that tarrieth but a Day*. Without the help of others, his Body could then do nothing towards the Support of its self, and if there was not a Gracious Provision laid in for him (thro' the good Providence of God) in the Bowels of other Men, without such *εὐρυ*, such a stock of Natural Affection and Compassion, *the Day of his Birth* wou'd ordinarily be *the Day of his Death*.

You will not think the Image too mean or low, if I further observe to you, how some other Animals are no sooner broke loose from the Shell, but they forthwith come at the Call, and run for shelter to Her that warmed them into Life, and soon learn by Imitation to feed themselves, and to distinguish what is proper for their Nourishment, from what is not, and to seek it and use it accordingly: But Man when he is first born, is only Passive even in what concerns the Animal Life; He can neither secure himself from Danger, nor run under the Wings and Protection of those that would afford Relief, he cannot be his own Purveyor, but intirely depends upon Charity for the Bread of Life. Alas! It is by slow Degrees that he comes to know and pursue the Ends for which the several Parts of his Body were given him, nay, it is by slow Degrees that they come to be fit for Use; his Wisdom, his Stature, and his Strength increase gradually, and *Childhood* is the State of the greatest Imperfection in all these, and therefore we may well conclude with the *Wise Man*, that *Childhood is Vanity*.

I pass on now to consider *Secondly*, the *Vanity* of Youth, for both *Childhood* and *Youth* are *Vanity*. Now it must be confessed, that tho' *Childhood* and *Youth* are both concluded under this mean and humbling Character of *Vanity*, yet they are not both so in the same Degree, or on the same Account: *Youth* is far removed from many of the Imperfections of *Childhood*; in *Youth* Reason appears, not indeed like the *Sun shining in his strength*, but like the *Twilight* or *Dawn of the Morning*, and tho' its *Glimmerings* are but imperfect, yet they discover to us the approach of *Day*, and solace us with the Comforts arising from the nearer Prospect of it.

In *Youth* we may observe some Capacity of *Vertue*, and they that are trained up betimes in the Way they should go, may then have their *Senses* in a good Measure exercised to discern between *Good* and *Evil*: In *Youth* the Understanding is ripe enough to receive Instruction, and that not only in the Business and Affairs of the World, in the Learning of Trades and civil Employments, for the Use and Benefit of this Life, but likewise in the far more important concerns of the other, in the *Ways of the Lord*, those which lead to his Glory, and our greatest good, the Sanctification and Salvation of our Souls.

Yet notwithstanding all these Advantages which *Youth* has above *Childhood*, this also is *Vanity*. Now the *Vanity* of *Youth* consists chiefly in its spiritual Weakness; the Understanding is then but little exercised by Observation or Experience, and it is too eager and rash in chusing, and consequently less disposed to chuse wisely; it is an Age rather fit to receive, than to give Instruction, and yet it is often very Headstrong and averse to the taking it: And happy it were if this was all the *Vanity* that *Youth* is subject unto, but there is something yet behind that is not only *Vanity*, but vexation of Spirit: I mean its early Propensity to Pleasures that are *Earthly*, *Sensual*, *Devilish*, its strong Byass towards Corruption, and its continual liableness to be deluded by the deceitfulness of sin: Some Lusts are so very strong in *Youth*, that the Apostle speaks of them as if they were peculiar to that Age, and therefore calls them *Youthful Lusts*, and exhorts his Son *Timothy* to avoid them. *Tim. 2. 22.*

In *Youth* the Pleasures of this World appear in the most ensnaring Beauty, and address themselves to the Mind, when the Body

best prepared to receive the Impression; that Vigour of Blood and Spirits which is at the height in the Days of our Youth, enforce more strongly Temptations that seem suited to its Complexion, and the little Acquaintance which young Men generally have with any thing else, besides what concerns the Animal Life, makes them more and more earnest in *making Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof*; so that (as one has well observed) the very Health and Strength of Youth, which is its greatest Blessing, is its greatest Danger. These give a Savour and Relish to Sensual Things, and render the Man the most eager after them, because most capable of their Enjoyment.

Besides, the Imagination and Passions of Youth being most strong, and Reason weak, the former represent Things too partially, and plead so strongly in favour of Flesh and Blood, that the latter has less Power to withstand the Force, or to make Head against the early Prejudices and Prepossessions of Sense.

The greatest Natural Security against the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, is Consideration; for the Temptations to any Sin whatsoever, the more closely they are examined, the less engaging they appear, and their *Strength is turned into Weakness* by searching thoroughly into their Nature, and by enquiring *what is to be done or suffered in the End thereof*: But the great Vanity of Youth consists in this, that it is an utter Enemy to Consideration, and has not Skill or Patience duly to weigh the Consequences of Things, and the other World appears at too great a Distance to come into the Account, and it is, and ever will be very difficult to overcome the Temptations of this World, but upon Principles drawn from the Consideration of the other, for according to the Words of St. John. *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*; Our Faith which (as another Apostle describes it) is the *Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen*; Our Faith, by which (with Moses) we *see Him that is Invisible*, and those Invisible States in the next Life which are of ten thousand times greater Moment to us than All that is to be desired or feared here, for the things that are seen, are Temporal; but the things that are not seen, are Eternal: Our Faith, which looketh unto

1 John 5. 4.

Heb. 11. 1,

Heb. 11. 27.

2 Cor. 4. 18.

Jesus

Heb. 12. 2. *Jesus the Author and Finisher of it, and with Gratitude and Love lays hold on the Atonement made in his Blood: Our Faith, which attends on its Compassionate Love from his Cradle in the Manger, to his Death upon the Cross, from his leaving his Father's Glory in Mercy to Sinners, to his returning thither again to make Intercession for them, and to give Gifts unto Men; such Gifts as may fit them for those Mansions above whither he is gone before to prepare a place for us*

John 14. 2. *Our Faith which beholds him Triumphant over Death, and the Grave in His Resurrection, and which with Joy Anticipates our own, when he shall come again in Glory to Judge the World according to his Gospel.*

These are Principles which set Good Christians above the World above the Goods or Evils of it, or rather above the Temptations arising from either: Principles whereby the God of all Grace re-

Eph. 3. 16. *fresheth the Souls of his Servants, and Strengthens them with might in the inner Man, and fills them with all*

Rom. 15. 13. *Joy and Peace in believing, and makes them to abound in hope thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost, which*

Heb. 6. 9. *hope is as an Anchor of the Soul both sure and stedfast,*

and which preserves it in Safety amidst the Storms of a Tempestuous World. But after all, such Principles have not ordinarily their full Strength, whilst Reason is weak, and it is very apparent, that the Life of Reason is but in its Infancy in the Days of our Youth, and the Life of Grace will not be so apt to thrive upon so faint a Stock, unless it is duly cultivated and improved by an early Care, and managed wisely thro' the Discretion of others, during the want of our own. Which leads me,

Thirdly, To shew what proper Inferences may be drawn from the foregoing Considerations. History informs us, that the Chinese (a very wise and populous Nation) began the publick Care of their Children from the very time of their Conception, and by reason of the tender Impressions which they receive in and thro' the Mother, there was early Provision made for the Security and Welfare of the Invisible Life of the tender Babe, and great Caution used, that no Passion might be raised in the Mother, which might have any ill effect upon the Child. And since so very close is the Union and Dependence of the one on the other, and the Mother and Child are

so much One, and so intimately link'd together ; It is certainly the Wisdom of all Mothers to imitate that wise People at least so far, as to avoid as much as possible the hearing or reading, or even thinking upon frightful Stories, or seeing monstrous and terrifying sights, or indeed any thing that may too strongly affect the Imagination, and all this out of Compassion to the Fruit of their Womb, least that suffer thro' the violent Impressions that are made upon the Parent by such means. But I shall proceed to what is more evident, and within the compass of every Bodies Observation, And

First, from the *Vanity of Childhood*, that is, from the Weakness and Impotency of that tender Age, I infer the Obligations of Children towards their Parents ; Children are infinitely bound to *Love, Honour, and Succour their Fathers and Mothers*, in Consideration of that Care they took of them, when they were unable to take any (the least) Care of themselves : How ought Children to study according to the Apostle's Phrase to *requite their Parents*, to pay them that which they have well deserved, to pay them always with Duty, and where need is, with Maintenance, for all their Labour of Love towards them. Can a Child ever do enough for those of whom under God he has been holden up ever since he was born ? For those who have Day after Day, and Night after Night, willingly foregone their own Ease and Rest to procure His, and who by Prayers and Tears have labour'd to remove those Evils from him, which all their other Endeavours could not happily Effect. Surely Undutiful Children forget that ever they were Infants, or else they could never be Undutiful : Their long and entire Dependence upon their Parents is a strong, very strong band of Duty, and probably one Reason why the All-wise Providence brings Man into the World more helpless, and continues him longer so, than other Creatures, is, that the Affection between Children and Parents may be the stronger, thro' the Sense of those manifold Obligations : For we find that other Creatures whose Dependence is not so great, and not so lasting, soon forget their young Ones, and their young Ones them ; but Man the most Impotent, and the longest so, should ever Remember the Days of Weakness, for they were many, and never disregard those Persons who in that feeble State were the Staff and Support of his Life.

Let then the *Vanity of Childhood*, that State of Impotency ever make all Children duly Mindful, both, how much their Parents have done for them, and how much they ought to do for their Parents; that their very Infirmities may be the Seeds of Virtue and Motives of Duty, and dispose them by Obedience to return *their Parents Love into their own Bosom, that what they sow'd in Tears, they may reap with Joy.* How forcible to this purpose are those Words of the Wise Son of Sirach, *Ecclus. 8. 27, 28. Honour thy Father with thy whole Heart, and forget not the Sorrows of thy Mother; Remember that thou wast begotten of them, and how canst thou recompence them the Things that they have done for thee?* Is it not the highest Degree of Ingratitude, for Children to be Stubborn and Disobedient to their Parents, and to refuse to go or come at their Command, who formerly ran at their Childrens Cry, and were never more uneasy than when they were in Want? The Voice of their Childrens Necessities was to the Parents a Powerful Voice, this bad them *go and they went, come and they came,* and the Centurion's Servant was not more Obedient to the Summons of his Master, than tender Parents are to the Call of their tender Children.

Let disobedient Children therefore but learn to consider what they have received from their Parents, and then certainly they will consider also what they owe them. Let them behold Infants in Arms, or *hanging yet upon their Mothers Breasts,* let them observe what Pains is taken to prevent or remove any of the Inconveniences of Life from the feeble Babe, and let them also remember, that such weak Infants they themselves once were, and were nourished into that Increase of Strength and Stature which they now enjoy, thro' their Parents Care, the great Instruments of giving and preserving their Life; and surely these Views will make them exceeding cautious how they grieve by their Obstinacy and Perverseness, those Persons from whom they have received so much in Love; and very careful not to make the Days of their Youth and Manhood a greater Burthen to their Parents thro' their Sins, than those of Infancy and Childhood were thro' their Infirmities.

Secondly, From the Vanity of Youth, I mean its Spiritual Weakness, particularly its exceeding great Proneness to submit to the Temptations of Sensual Pleasures, and the Corruptions that are in

the *World thro' Lusts*; I infer the Obligations of Parents towards their Children, to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, and train them betimes in the Way they should go, that when they are Old, they may not depart from it: The stronger their Dispositions at that Age are to transgress, the more diligent ought Parents to be in their Endeavours to prevent their transgressing, and to balance the Propensity and Inclinations of Corrupt Nature, by the Rudiments and Principles of Grace: *Precept should be upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line* *Is. 28. 10, 13.* *Line, here a little and there a little*, as the Prophet speaks; wholesome Instruction should be infused so constantly, and withal so leisurely, that it may the more surely sink into them. More particularly young Persons should be made early acquainted with the *Powers of the World to come*, and be taught *Heb. 6. 5.* to remember their Creator and their Redeemer in the Days of their Youth; that there is, there can be, no possible Comparison between Time and Eternity, or between the *Pleasures of Sin which are but for a Season*, and the *Pleasures at God's right Hand for evermore*; and consequently, that it is infinitely better, that they should deny themselves here, than that God and Christ should deny them hereafter, deny themselves the Gratification of their Lusts, all sinful Instances of Pleasure, than that God and Christ should deny them the Everlasting Joys and Glories of an Heavenly Kingdom.

Such Principles as these often and seriously inculcated upon young Men by those Persons whom they have most Reason to esteem and love, will by the Grace of God help to cool their intemperate Desires, and turn the edge of their Youthful Lusts another Way: Such Principles of Grace are of such vast Importance, that they will demand some Consideration and Regard, even from those who are not by Nature much disposed to consider, and such an happy seasoning of the Mind with such undeniable and momentous Truths, will by Degrees dispose Young Persons to a due seriousness, and thereby mightily help to preserve them from being *hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin*.

Let therefore the *Vanity of Youth* awaken and engage the Care of the Aged; particularly, of Parents towards their Children, and of Masters (who are as in the Parents stead) towards their Servants; that by their Counsel and Advice, the Dispositions of their Chil-

dren and Servants, may be happily turned from the Service of sinful Lusts, to which they are too much inclin'd, *to the Service of the Living God*, to which they are too much averse. *Have pity upon them, have pity upon them*, all ye, who by Experience know the Danger Youth is in, and the Way to escape it, *teach them the Good and the Right Way*, that both you and they *may find Rest unto your Souls*.

Thirdly, Forasmuch as *Youth is Vanity*, as appears from the Weakness of Reason, from the want of Experience, and from the Prepossession of a strong Imagination, and corrupt Affections at that Age. I might easily shew how reasonable it is, that young Men should entertain a just Jealousy of themselves, and not forthwith grow head-strong, or think themselves fit to be their own Masters, and to follow their own Wills in every Thing: A little thought would soon let them see that it is highly reasonable that they should hearken unto those, *whose Days speak, and whom multitude of Years teach Wisdom*; because they must certainly be the best Judges of what is *meet, right, and their bounden Duty*, who have long had both Knowledge and Experience in the Nature and Consequences of Good and Evil; who have seen, and perhaps felt the *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* that there is in the ways of Sin, and the Pleasure and Peace of Conscience, that is to be met with *in the paths of Righteousness and true Holiness*; Persons who can never envy them any Good, and as little mean them any Evil, such as these may easily be allowed to be better able and willing also to advise and direct young Men, than they themselves *who are but of yesterday, and know nothing*: Alas! self-conceit is the Ruin of Youth, but a little distrust of themselves would soon prove the Foundation of great Wisdom; this would help to bring them to a just Sense of their State, and that by God's Blessing will soon better it.

Fourthly, are both *Childhood and Youth Vanity*? Methinks the Consideration of so much time spent in weakness, Natural and Spiritual weakness, and so little to the best Purposes of Living, should engage All Persons to use their Strength both of Body and Mind as it increaseth, *to the Redeeming of the Time* past by the improving the Time to come, that their setting out so slowly at first may engage them to make the greater Speed as they come nearer to the middle, or End of their Race.

Indeed could we spend all our Time from our Cradles to our Graves in the Service of our God, 'twould be no more than what is very becoming Creatures towards their Gracious Creator, and *our present Service* would even then bear no Proportion to the Greatness of our *future Recompence of Reward*; but since the Infirmities of our Nature incapacitate us for many Years for any reasonable Service, surely when we come to the use of our Reason we should be the more careful how we loose any time, or squander away those precious Moments that remain, which are so much shorter even than our Natural Life.

Thus have I very briefly consider'd the *Vanity* both of *Childhood* and of *Youth*, and the proper Duties arising thence, *viz.* The Duty of Children towards their Parents; and of Parents towards their Children; and of young Persons towards themselves; and of all Persons towards God, on the account of that waste of Time which the Infirmities and Weaknesses of their Nature occasion in this imperfect State, all which should make us more desirous to spend the Remnant that is left to his Honour, who gives the whole, and likewise earnestly to breath after that blessed Place where we shall be *made like unto the Angels*, and serve and worship God with Constancy and Vigour, without Interruption, and without End. And what can I say more, but exhort Children, Parents, Young Persons, nay all Persons seriously to consider, and sincerely endeavour to answer their respective Obligations with all their Power.

But forasmuch as some Parents (however willing) may not sometimes be able to help their Children, and by reason of Sicknes, or some other great Calamity cannot sufficiently *administer to their own Necessities*, much less support others, who in the course of Nature depend upon them, or by Death may be snatch'd away from the Opportunity of providing for their Childrens Comfortable Living in this World, or happily in the next; how seasonably in such a Case does the Charity of others step in to the Relief of the Poor Destitute Children *exposed* as it were *in a Cradle of Bullrushes* to the Waves of this troublesome World, and *breeds them up as Pharaoh's Daughter did Moses for her own Son*. Which naturally brings me in the last Place to make some Application suitable to the Charitable Occasion of our Meeting together here this Day.

While

Whilst I have before my Eyes so many Orphans and Poor Children (whom I think I may call the Adopted Children of Charity, because they are supported by Love, and feel the tenderness of a Parent towards them lodg'd by Providence in the Bowels of others who were perhaps Strangers to them, and the want of Education in the Natural Order of things happily supply'd by Grace) I cannot but in the first Place give Glory to God on this Occasion, and cry out with his Apostle, *Thanks be unto God for his Unspeakable Gift.*

For, how does this *most excellent Gift of Charity* labour to secure these Helpless Children from the Bane of Idleness, which is the Rust of the Soul, and instead of having nothing to do (which must expose them to the Temptations of doing ill) train them up in the Way of Industry and Virtue, prepare them for such Arts and Employments as may make them truly useful in their Generation, beneficial to others, as well as profitable to themselves, and teach them to labour, and *to work with their own Hands the thing that is good, that they in their turns may have to give to him that needeth.* How does it snatch them out of Harms way, and from the Opportunity of hearing little else but Cursing and Swearing (which is the too usual Language of Idle Dissolute Persons in every Corner of the Streets,) it early instructs them to *keep their Tongues from evils, and their Lips that they speak no guile;* and whilst it accustoms them to *bear the Yoke in their Youth,* it makes them the more patient under it, till by Degrees its very *weight is easie, and its burden is light.* How careful is this Charity to sow the Seeds of Godliness and Honesty in their Hearts, by the Means of wholesome Knowledge, and by furnishing them with proper Employments both of Body and Soul, without which many of them would probably have been ignorant of *what they must do to be saved,* and some even of what they must do to live, till they had added to the Number of those *Fools* of whom *Solomon* complains, that

Prov. 10. 21.

they die for lack of Wisdom. Which way then can our Charity be more usefully employ'd than in thus qualifying young Persons to become faithful Servants to God and Man, and in putting them in the Way to *get their own Living, and to do their Duty in that State of Life unto which it shall please God to call them.* Surely it is far greater Charity to fit them for some Calling, that they may with Diligence *eat their own Bread,* than after they are reduced

reduced to Beggary, to feed them with the Bread of Idleness from your Tables every Day.

'Tis true, there are some Objects may strike more upon our Senses, and thro' them reach our Bowels, and affect the Heart; the Condition of the Maimed, the Halt, the Blind; and such like, is apt to touch us with a *feeling of their Infirmities*, and as their Wants are visible, so we are led by Sight and Instinct to compassionate and relieve them, and *Blessed are they who are thereupon (as Job was) Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame*, and as Opportunity serves do them good: But the Charity I am now recommending, rather aims at the prevention than cure of Evil, and by forecast and early Care endeavours to bring up Youth in such a Manner, that they may live comfortably here and happily hereafter; by acquainting them betimes with wholesome Christian Principles, it lays the Foundation for a Christian Life, it labours to prevent looseness of Manners, and many other Spiritual Evils, whose Genuine Fruit is Poverty and Shame, Pain, Misery and Death.

Having said thus much of the Excellency of this Charity, I shall only crave leave in a few Words to address my self to the Givers and to the Receivers of it. You then that are the Dispensers of this Charity, well know the Sincerity of your own Hearts, the Uprightness of your Intentions, and the exceeding Usefulness of your Work; your Aim is the Glory of God, and the Good (the publick and private Good) of Men, to rescue Young Persons from the Temptations of the World, and *the Snare of the Devil*, to remove the great Disadvantages arising from the *Vanity of Youth*, and to graft instead thereof what may enable them to *bring forth much Fruit in their Age*, and render them beneficial to themselves and others in the following Stages of Life; and *verily I say unto you ye shall in no wise loose your Reward*, ye have a present Reward in what ye do, in the Name, and for the Sake, and by the Grace of your God, as well as in the Manifold happy Consequences of it.

When you hear, or read, or consider the Rank which this Grace of Charity holds in the Christians Catalogue of Duties, and the many Blessings that attend and follow it, Sure I am, ye are among the *Blessed of the Lord who hath made Heaven and Earth*; Blessed, under the Hopes of making many others so; *Blessed, as being good Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God*; *Blessed, as laying up for yourselves*

yourselfes a good Foundation against the Time to come that ye may lay hold on Eternal Life : Nay, I must say further, ye are a publick Blessing, and that not only as providing for the publick good of the Nation, by the Care you take of the Welfare of many of its Members, who might otherwise prove extremely prejudicial to it; but likewise by directly drawing down a Blessing from God on that People amongst whom he sees true *Charity so much abound*. When I consider how many Schools Charity has in a few Years set up in this and the Neighbouring Kingdom, wherein many Thousands enjoy the Benefit of a Liberal Education, I cannot but rejoice in *hope that God hath yet a Blessing in store for us*, notwithstanding our many Provocations, and great Ingratitude for his Manifold Mercies; and tho' *Iniquity and Infidelity do sadly abound*, and threaten us with utter Ruine, yet forasmuch as the *Love of many does not wax Cold*, and we see these Seminaries of Charity increase in Number daily, may we not still hope that this *our Labour of Love* may keep far from us the sore Judgment we have at this time too much reason to fear, and may *lengthen out our Tranquility* and prove a Security to our other Blessings. And as I doubt not but each of you is ready to say hereupon, *Blessed be the Lord who hath allotted me the more blessed Part to give and not to receive*, *Blessed be the Lord who hath given me the Heart to open my Hands to his Poor Servants in their time of Need*, so I shall only add this by way of return in the Psalmist's Words, *the Lord prosper you, we wish you good Luck in the Name of the Lord*.

But my Brethren the unhappy Circumstances into which we are lately fallen, will oblige me to obviate one difficulty, arising from the Scarcity of Money that is at present amongst us : And that this may not prove an Obstruction to our Charity, let us consider that no Man was ever yet the Poorer for what in an honest Heart by prudently *giving to the Poor he lent unto the Lord*; he that makes use of his Wealth as God requires, makes him his Debtor, and can

Heb. 10. 23.

2 Cor. 9. 6.

Prov. 11. 23.

Deut. 29. 10.

never fail of his Blessing, for *he is faithful that hath promised*, promised that *he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully*, and the liberal Soul shall be made fat and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself, and for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy Works, and in all that thou puttest thine Hand unto

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Let therefore a suitable Frugality supply other Deficiencies, let us retrench what we can from our Pride and Luxury, and sometimes even from our ordinary Food and Raiment, that we may feed the Hungry, or cloath the Naked, or instruct the Ignorant, &c. but let Charity be the last thing we retrench from; for it is one of the worst Uses we can make of the badness of the Times, to suffer it to be an Excuse or Pretence for the with-holding or lessening our Charity; the utmost Extremity alone should dispose us to borrow of the Allowance we may have devoted to the Poor, and our Conveniences should rather yield to their Necessities, and our lesser give way to their yet greater Wants. It is a Glorious Character which St. Paul gives of the Charity of the *Macedonians*, 2 Cor. 8. 1, 2. which he styles *the Grace of God bestowed on them, how that in a great Trial of Affliction, the abundance of their Joy, and their deep Poverty abounded unto the Riches of their Liberality, for according to their Power, yea and beyond their Power, they were willing of themselves*: When they were in a State of Persecution, and under very pressing Wants, they chearfully lent an helping Hand towards the relieving their Christian Brethren under yet deeper Distress, almost to the forgetting of their own: Blessed be God our straits are not so great as theirs, and that we must allow is a good reason why our Charity should not be less.

Indeed this great City has been lately very remarkably Liberal towards many, very many useful Members of it, I mean those poor Artificers who were able and willing, and even desirous to work, when yet it was *not in the Power of their Hands to do it*, for want of the usual Demands of their Manufactures, the ordinary Support of themselves and Families; and great Charity no doubt it is to encourage and relieve those who are disposed to labour, and to spend their Strength and Time in the Service of their Country, by improving to the best Advantage the chief Product of it. But Charity seldom confines herself to any one particular Object or Occasion, but is ready to *do good unto all Men* according to its Ability, and their Wants. Your Charity, my Brethren, has I am perswaded a Blessing left in store for these impotent Children, who stand before you clad from Head to Foot in Manufactures of your own, and your Charity even in the single Article of Cloathing them in this Manner, is of great Advantage to many others, who must receive benefit from

what they consume : I believe it would be very satisfactory as well as surprizing for any one to sit down and Calculate, how many particular Traders find some account from what these wear thro' your Charity, and whilst you thus give them *Raiment to put on*, you help to give *Bread* to others that are *Needy*, and Multitudes are refresh'd by your Charity, besides those that are the direct and immediate Objects of it; who, I trust will not cease to *offer up their Prayers to God for you*, and their Praises to Him *the Giver of every good and perfect Gift for the exceeding Grace of God in you*.

And to this end, I shall now address my self Secondly, to the Receivers of this Charity, and I could wish that *you who are Children in Age, in Understanding were Men*, that you might thoroughly know and consider and answer the Obligations which the Charity of your Benefactors lays upon you. My little Children methinks it should be no hard Matter even for you to observe, that you are in this Manner *taken out from the World* in order to *be delivered from the greatest Evils of it*; your very Habit serves to put you in Mind of your Distinction, and that you are seperated from those of the like Age and Condition for some peculiar Reasons, and to some peculiar Purposes; your Dress as it were speaks you to be the Children of the same common Parent, (the Children of Charity,) and this ought to dispose you to distinguish yourselves by that Diligence and Industry, which is her Intention and Design, and by that Gratitude to your Benefactors, and Thankfulness to God, as becomes such as are upheld by the Bounty of the one, thro' the Grace of the other : As God has thro' them provided that you should *understand the things pertaining to Life and Godliness*, and you have time allowed you to these good Purposes, I am sure it is your great Duty to use your time to these good Purposes; for such as you to spend your Days in Idleness or Dissoluteness of Manners, and to become afterwards remarkable for ill Words, or any kind of ill Works would not only to your Reproach miserably prevent the ends of this Charity, but cast a blot and bring Dishonour, and a Discouragement upon the Charity itself. Such vile Ingratitude would shame those Spiritual Parents who have *laboured in vain to beget you again unto good Works*, and rob them of the Joy they proposed to themselves in being the happy Instruments of your Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal Welfare.

But least your tender Age should hinder you from being duly sensible of these Truths upon once hearing them, I therefore address my self to others for you, and call on your behalf to those who are your Masters and Mistresses who have the more immediate Care over you, that they teach you not only your Books and your respective Work, but that they labour to make you duly sensible of the End aimed at by your Benefactors, and your great Duty to *walk worthy of it unto all well-pleasing*; That they do what in them lyes to make you true Christians, good Protestants, sincere Members of the Church established by Law, and faithful Subjects to our Gracious Sovereign King George, and Zealous for the Protestant Succession in his Illustrious House, as being that upon which under God the Religion, Liberties, and Properties of Us and Our Posterity do visibly depend, that so these Charitable Nurseries may meet with publick, as well as private Encouragement, whilst they are by Experience found to contribute to the Welfare of the Society, as well as to the particular Good of particular Men.

Finally let us all address our selves unto God for a Blessing on these Seminaries of Youth, that he would bless the Sowers, and bless the Seed sown, that the one may Sow plenteously, the other bring forth Fruit plenteously, and in a word, that God may crown such our *Labours of Love* with his Favour here, and with his Blessing for ever : And to add yet greater force to this Petition, I close all with that excellent Collect of our Church.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace and of all Vertue, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

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But least your tender Age should hinder you from being duly sensible of these Truths upon once hearing them, I therefore address myself to others for you, and call on your behalf to those who are your Masters and Mistresses who have the more immediate Care over you, that they teach you not only your Books and your religious Works, but that they labour to make you duly sensible of the End aimed at by your Benefactors, and your great Duty to make it into all men pleasing; That they do what in them lies to make you true Christians, good Protestants, sincere Members of the Church established by Law, and faithful Subjects to our Gracious Sovereign King George, and Zealous for the Protestant Succession in his Majesty's House, as being that upon which under God the Religion, Liberties, and Properties of Us and Our Posterity do wholly depend, that to these Charitable Nurseries may meet with such, as well as private Encouragement, whilst they are by Experience found to contribute to the Welfare of the Society, as well as to the particular Good of particular Men.

And for as much as I address myself to God for a Blessing on the Seminars of Youth, I should bless the Sowers, and the Seed sown, that the Word may be plentifully, the other Word, that God may crown our Labours of Love with his Favour here, and with his Blessing ever: And to add yet greater force to this Petition, I dole with that excellent Collect of our Church.



Lord, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are empty vanity, send us Holy Ghost and pour into our Hearts that precious Gift of Charity, the only Bond of Peace and of all Virtues, which is counted dearer than silver and gold, and is the only way to eternal life. Amen.

F I W I S

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